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W I S D O M, 3

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A

P O E M.

Eam, qui amat, vitam amat.

He, who loves her, loves life.

The Fourth Edition.

L O N D O N :

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W I S D O M,

A

P O E M.

WISDOM I sing—what bearded sage can chuse
A theme more weighty, more sublime a muse?
A muse from which, if I but catch a ray,
The good shall bless, the just approve the lay.

Oh thou! the source of life, and light, and soul,
Thou great Supreme, thou Wisdom of the whole!
'Tis thine alone to light the poet's flame;
The glory's thine—Jehovah is thy name.
Unblest by thee, how poor the proudest strain!
Reason perplexes, genius shines in vain;
Wit sparkles in the dark, and learning tries!
On cobweb steps to climb into the skies.
Vain efforts all! though proudly all combine
To raise the giant-bard, he falls supine;
If thou bright sun, art absent, all is shade,
Is darkness all, and soon the laurels fade.

Then grant, Omniscient, grant a heavenly beam
 To warm my heart, and sanctify my theme;
 For tho' an abject worm, thy power, I trust,
 Can make that worm sing praises in the dust:
 Nor hopeless can it sing, for thou hast spoke,
 And never was thy gracious promise broke;
 Oh let it be remember'd in my strain,
 That none can ever serve the Lord in vain.
 Come then, great patron, and thy will be done,
 For thou canst finish what thou hast begun;
 Tho' feeble pinion'd in the dust I lie,
 Yet thou, the great I AM, canst raise me high.
 If thou but touch the mountains they shall smoke,
 Oh! strike that rock, my heart, and be it broke;
 The living waters will gush forth amain,
 Run through the desert mind, and overspread the plain.

Thus as, erewhile, I silent, musing, sat
 In deep humility at WISDOM's gate,
 Soft o'er my breast a sacred fervour came,
 Caught the cold muse, and wrapt her in a flame.
 Soft as the softest summer dews distil,
 Sweet as the music of the trickling rill,
 The quick'ning effluence fell, and, close behind,
 A small, but cogent voice, address'd my mind—
 “ Tho' WISDOM cries aloud, and in the streets
 “ Utters her voice to every one she meets,
 “ Tho' pleads, persuades, enforces and alarms,
 “ While, sweetly eloquent, the charmer charms,
 “ Deaf as an Adder to the sacred strain,
 “ Folly prevails and WISDOM pleads in vain,

" And is there none, none willing to defend
 " Her glorious cause? no profelyte or friend!
 " Arise, young man, in all the power of truth,
 " Be thine the task, wed WISDOM in thy youth."
 Thus far the voice persuasive—but the muse
 Unequal to the task would fain refuse;
 When, lo! more awful, speaks th' eternal word—
 " Go on, fear not, I'm with thee, I the Lord."
 Obedient now, with faith I take the pen—
 Awake, arise, attend, ye sons of men!

BEFORE th' Almighty Fiat had gone forth,
 Before depths were, or ever was the earth,
 From everlasting—ere the hills were made,
 Or the foundations of the mountains laid,
 Before creation's ensigns were unfurl'd,
 Or rais'd the lofty summits of the world.
 She was. —————
 When first the great Creator did prepare
 The heav'ns, and heav'n of heavens, she was there,—
 WISDOM divine! adorable the name!
 Death and destruction both, have heard her fame.
 Who knows her, knows, as did her sons of old,
 How much more valu'd she than Ophir's gold.
 The precious onyx, and the sapphire, are,
 With her, too mean, too worthless, to compare.
 Talk not of corals, pearls, and such-like wares,
 Far above rubies is the price she bears.
 Her dow'r is honour, riches, length of days,
 Her paths are peace, and pleasant all her ways.

So sung the bard affliction taught to sing,
 And so her own sweet child, th' experienc'd king ;
 And tho' but few, the immortal songs receive,
 Though fewer still th' eternal truths believe ;
 Yet WISDOM is a mistress all pursue,
 The false, too oft, mistaken for the true.
 In nature's pride they wish the heavenly prize;
 Seek it in earth, in seas, in air and skies,
 And ev'ry place, but where the jewel lies. }
 Why glories this man in intrigues of state ;
 Why that in learn'd harangues, and deep debate ;
 Why one in proud philosophy—and why
 Another in thy arts, sweet poetry.—
 Why this in Cynic, that in Stoic rules,
 And why, ah why ! in foolishness e'en fools ?
 Oh WISDOM ! injur'd beauty, 'tis thy fame
 They vainly court ; thy everlasting name !
 Like earthly suitors 'mong the men of parts,
 But few, too few, are lovers in their hearts ;
 With toys, and trifles, some would win thy praise,
 And some by study's more laborious ways.
 The trifler and the student are the same,
 Dissemblers both, and know thee but by name.
 With borrowed jewels they approach thy shrine.
 Rich in the lore of every grace but thine ;
 Adorn'd with all fair science can bestow,
 Or truth impart, or moral virtue know ;
 But still distemper'd, like a sick man's dream,
 The heart, unhallowed, blesses not thy beam.
 And but for this, a Bolingbroke had stood
 First in the rank, amongst the wise and good ;

And but for this, in philosophic fame,
 Learning and wisdom had been still the same,
 Like stars of greatest magnitude had shone ;
 For ever wedded, and for ever one.

YE worst of counterfeits, ye falsely wise,
 Why toil ye thus in vanities and lies?
 Say, what avails, to know what angry stars
 Threat kings with death, and states with bloody wars ;
 What insect tribes on earth's broad surface creep,
 What finny shoals inhabit in the deep ;
 In air aloft, what feather'd nations soar.
 What savage monsters through the desert roar ;
 What bears the field, or what the lonely wood,
 Of herbs for physic, or of plants for food ;
 To know all nature's secrets, what avails,
 If in a greater point your knowledge fails?
 Know ye yourselves?—alas! how vain to roam
 In search of that which must be found at home !
 Have ye found WISDOM? 'tis a gross mistake,
 A dream that will be painful when you wake.
 Claim not the glorious title of my song,
 To you, proud nat'ralists, it don't belong ;
 Exterior honours may by man be given,
 But WISDOM is a name that's writ in heaven.

SPEAK thou, Horatio, thou the pride of schools,
 Great sophister, rever'd by learned fools.
 Say, for thou canst, in what their studies end ;
 Confess, be honest, and I'll call thee friend.

When heaps of volumes have been ponder'd o'er,
 When cross'd each sea, and travers'd ev'ry shore;
 When learnt the songs the heathen bards have sung,
 Skill'd in each art, and vers'd in ev'ry tongue;
 When all the alps of science are o'erpass'd,
 Tell me, Horatio, what is gain'd at last?
 " The world's applause, perhaps the prince's smile,
 " And flatt'ry's pois'nous potions, smooth as oil,
 " The poet's laurel, or the victor's palm,
 " But not one drop of Gilead's precious Balm."
 Then poor is ev'ry recompence beside,—
 Vainly pre-eminent, thou wander'st wide;
 'Tis nought but folly still to study on,
 To weary out the flesh, and ne'er have done;
 Still o'er thy toils will darker doubts arise,
 And thou'lt be further still from being wise;
 There are who boast (so great is human pride)
 Reason alone, and laugh at all beside,
 Who measure all things by its glimm'ring ray,
 Nor heed the sun-shine of the gospel-day.
 Tho' born, oh Britain! on thy awful shore,
 Where Judah's Lion has been heard to roar,
 Tho' train'd, oh Albion! in thy happy isle,
 Where truth and freedom wear a holy smile;
 About thee still remain their country's shame,
 Apostates scornful of the Christian name;
 Who, all unaw'd, in mortal prowess stand,
 Ready to question each divine command;
 Eager to blot, with more than Jewish rage,
 The glorious truths that fill the Christian page;

Tho' prov'd, through ages, by the just and good,
And sign'd, and seal'd, with many a martyr's blood.

Lo, on false Wisdom's pinnacle, how proud
Hilarius stands, and overlooks the crowd !
Great Newton gone, his heart exults to see,
None in astronomy more learn'd than he.
So far he trusts his reason in the skies,
He half suspects his Bible tells him lies.

" Sun, stand thou still in Gibeon," Joshua said,
" And thou, oh moon ! in Ajalon be stay'd !"
And is't not written, that they both obey'd ?

" 'Twas writ, and 'twas believ'd, Hilarius cries,
" In ancient times, but moderns are more wise ;
" Nor sun nor moon, to me it plain appears,
" Could ever stop, unless expell'd their spheres ;
" And if from thence one moment they were hurl'd,
" At once would perish ev'ry lower world."

Thus argue rationals, nor will believe
Of WISDOM aught, beyond what they conceive ;
But know, Hilarius, if the pow'r I sing
Finds in thy heart one tender, trembling string,
On which to strike, the muse may stop thee soon,
Tho' hard thou seem'st to stop, as sun, or moon.

SAY, first, of reason why this proud dispute,
Why proud of that which but o'erlooks the brute ?
In things expos'd quite obvious to thy view,
What, with thy boasted reason, can'st thou do ?

Can'st thou dissect an atom? can'st thou frame
 The spider's textile dome, or grasp a flame?
 Can'st thou, audacious! to Olympus rise,
 And stop the rapid lightning when it flies?
 If here thy reason fails, and thou refuse
 To answer aught before a trembling muse,
 Thus to thy heart (oh let that heart be aw'd!)
 In powerful Wisdom speaks the voice of God—
 " Gird up thy loins, oh man! before me stand,
 " And answer thou to what I shall demand.
 " If thou hast understanding, show it now—
 " When first I founded earth, say, where wast thou?
 " Know'st thou whereon 'tis fasten'd? is it thine
 " Now to declare what mighty hand divine
 " Its measures spread; who stretch'd the line thereon,
 " Or who it was that laid the corner stone,
 " What time the morning stars together sang,
 " And heav'n, with joyful acclamations, rang?
 " Hast thou an arm like God, thou earthly limb!
 " Or can'st thou thunder with a voice like him?
 " Are heav'n's high ordinances thine to scan,
 " Can'st thou on earth their great dominion plan?
 " Can'st thou the Pleiades sweet influence bind,
 " Or loose Orion's bands, and rule the wind?
 " Can'st thou, in season, bring huge Mazz'roth forth,
 " Or guide Arcturus o'er the stormy north?
 " Have death's dark gates been open'd to thy sight,
 " Or dost thou know the place where dwelleth light?"
 Abash'd Hilarius stands; and, quite controul'd,
 Trembles that heart, which was of late so bold.

Mute is that tongue which ne'er was mute before ;
 Reason adores—nor can the mortal more.
 Yet stay, Hilarius, yet a moment stay,
 Nor, let vain notions hurry thee away.
 Now while thy soul, thus solemnly o'eraw'd,
 Trembles beneath th' idea of a God ;
 With faith affirms his being, nor denies
 But that he is almighty and all-wise ;
 Oh keep the grand conception in thy view,
 And let the muse th' important point pursue.

His truth endures for ever—and his fame
 Is everlasting—holy is his name !
 What can he not ! His pow'rful word of old
 Lighted the stars, and cloth'd the sun in gold ;
 Tinctur'd the moon with silver, bade them shine,
 And order'd all with majesty divine.
 As at his word thus gloriously they shone,
 All brightness, tho' but dust, beneath his throne ;
 So at his word by Joshua convey'd,
 The sun stood still—the moon obedient stay'd.
 Perish the thought, in which it is conceiv'd,
 What passes reason should not be believ'd.
 Reason, Hilarius, ever wanders wide,
 Unless she walks with Wisdom by her side.
 Her powers exerted, may be false, or true,
 As good or bad the purpose they pursue.
 False is her light, and endless she may stray,
 When pride in natural knowledge leads the way.
 But sure her path, when faithful virtue guides,
 And humble, awful, holy fear presides.

Then is she fair, and noble, fit to rule,
 And judge aright; but truant once from school,
 (The school of Wisdom) nothing is so bad;
 No frenzy half so desperately mad.
 Reason, unaw'd, runs counter to her rule,
 Loses her function, and becomes a fool.
 In speculation's field she roams abroad,
 And, in dead works, forgets the living God;
 Distrusts his truth, and dares his pow'r assail,
 Arm'd, like Goliath, in a coat of mail:
 A heart so harden'd, that it dares defy
 E'en all the armies of a God most high.
 Wit, like a brazen helmet, may be said
 To glare, and cast false lustre from her head:
 Learning her pompous target may appear;
 Her staff, vain glory; argument, her spear;
 Before her bold presumption bears her shield,
 And thus, 'gainst God himself, she takes the field.

Is this true reason? never be it said
 A thought so impious in thy heart was bred.
 True reason is intelligent, and knows
 The sacred source from which her current flows.
 In all the wondrous works she meets abroad,
 She owns her blindness, and submits to God.
 But why abroad for wonders should we roam,
 When greater wonders may be found at home?
 That sun or moon should stop thou think'st it strange,
 Unless the system of the skies should change;
 But is't not stranger proof of greater power;
 Thou e'er hadst life, or now shouldst live an hour?

Know'st thou the nature of the human frame,
 That world of wonders, more than we can name?
 Say, has thy busy, curious eye survey'd
 The proofs of boundless WISDOM there display'd?
 How rang'd each fibre with amazing skill,
 That ev'ry muscle may attend thy will;
 How ev'ry tendon acts upon its bone,
 And how the nerves receive their nicer tone;
 Convey the keen vibrations of the sense,
 And give the wakeful mind intelligence;
 How some strong guard each vital part sustains;
 How flows the purple balsam through the veins;
 That, how commix'd, dispos'd, how wondrous these;
 Here in one trunk, there ramify'd like trees;
 The finer vessels of the brain how small,
 How numberless; and yet we see not all?
 But see enough, Hilarius, for we see
 God is the maker, and his creatures we!
 'Tis not for us to question, but to praise
 The great Creator, wise in all his ways.
 But say, can reason, or can aught below,
 Make heav'nly streams from earthly fountains flow?
 Can man, polluted, praise the God of light?
 Not pure are purest Angels in his sight.
 Oh! then, what muse can proper praise inspire,
 "Hallow the heart, and touch the lips with fire?"
 To WISDOM only does the pow'r belong,
 WISDOM, the muse, the mistress, and the song!
 Vain is all praise, unless by her 'tis giv'n;
 Her's is the praise of ev'ry harp in heav'n.

Music is all her own, she tunes the spheres,
 And sets to numbers, hours, days, months, and years;
 And, what is more, Hilarius, does impart
 Her notes celestial to the human heart—
 Attunes the strings of joy, and charms despair,
 Calms to sweet peace, and opes the door of pray'r;
 Gives the sick soul with livelier hopes to rise,
 And seek an heritage beyond the skies.
 Oh, what amazing wonders does she here!
 Makes barren fruitful, makes the rough path clear,
 Makes roses spring where thistles grew before,
 And lambs to bleat, where wolves were wont to roar;
 Before her tempests cease, and storms subside,
 Rocks melt, and mountains sink, and seas divide:
 O'er death's dark shade she pours her living ray
 And opes the gates of everlasting day.
 Can Reason this? then why art thou distressed
 At aught in life, or why not always blest?
 When friends, or fortune, take their hasty leave,
 Why art thou then so great a fool to grieve!
 For grieve thou wilt; nor all thy reason can
 Dry up thy tears, and make thee more a man.
 When o'er thy head affliction's billows roll,
 And big distress weighs down thy sinking soul;
 Can reason guide thee to a happier coast,
 And land thee safe, that not a hair be lost?
 Then why dost tremble?—why heav'n's aid implore?
 'Tis plain thy reason helps thee then no more.
 And what, Hilarius, if I dare to say
 Mere human reason knows not how to pray?

Thou begg'st a blessing, think'st the boon no worse,
Which might, if granted, prove to thee a curse.

“TEACH my best reason, reason”—he who said,
Most wisely thought, and most devoutly pray'd.
Without that WISDOM infinite, which guides
Our finite views, and good from bad divides;
'Tis not in human wit, nor human might,
To act, or pray, or think one thought aright.
Tho' thy proud genius build its house as high
As human knowledge possibly can fly;
Prop it with reason, prouder still to rise,
And tell the world that lie, that thou art wise;
Not long the house, so rais'd, so prop'd, can stand,
For, “like the fool's,” 'tis built upon the sand.
Tho' bold the truth, accept it, for it flows
Free from a heart that dictates what it knows;
Free from a muse, who, near the sacred fount
Of WISDOM sings; nor seeks th' Aonian Mount;
Who courts no patron, no scholastic aid,
No alien-grace, nor Heliconian maid;
But trusts her humble artless song to fill
With simple truths, of power to save or kill;
Thro' him alone, who ancient is of days—
“From babes and sucklings he ordaineth praise.”
Dost ask what praise? oh let thy reason bow!
Know thy own self, and haply thou shalt know
More than a sun is in thee, though 'tis hurl'd
Beneath the worthless rubbish of the world;
Immers'd in vanity's inconstant tide,
And buried deep beneath the waves of pride.

Tho' undiscover'd in thy nat'ral will,
 The gem thou seek'st for is about thee still ;
 Attends thy footsteps, wherefoe'er they stray ;
 Thy path, thy bed, and ev'ry secret way ;
 Pierces the deep recesses of the mind,
 The darkest dungeons sin and death can find ;
 Flashes conviction thro' the proudest breast,
 And brings each boasted virtue to the test ;
 Makes manifest whate'er is wrong or right,
 And shines the just man's ever burning light.
 Tho' suns, and stars, and this terraqueous globe,
 And yon blue firmament, should all disrobe ;
 Tho' night, with ten-fold darkness, intervene,
 And second chaos more deform the scene ;
 Yet will it glitter through the gen'ral gloom,
 And hell itself be forc'd to give it room ;
 While fierce Gehenna's troops, with dread amaze,
 See, and believe, and tremble as they gaze.

Tho' diff'rent nations hold a diff'rent creed,
 As at the Ganges taught, or near the Tweed ;
 Tho' sects divide, and sub-divide again,
 Like parting rivers, seeking still the main ;
 The nice distinction lies but in the name,
 For virtue, grace, and goodness, are the same.
 Could the eye glance beyond the bounds of time,
 Or the thought soar thro' regions more sublime ;
 Yet all remote from WISDOM might we stray,
 And 'midst stupendous systems lose our way.
 In his own sphere, man's proper business lies ;
 In his own heart, the rule to make him wise.

The voice that thunders on the mountain's brow,
 And stirs the bottom of the deep below;
 The voice that roars, where'er the tempest rolls,
 And rends the isles, and shakes the distant poles;
 The voice that spake, "as never man was heard,"
 Speaks in thy heart—oh be that voice rever'd!
 Be passion, reason, genius over-aw'd,
 The voice of WISDOM is the voice of God.
 Mild as the breath of summer, or the gales
 Of young Favonius, o'er the smiling vales;
 Soft as the love-lorn mourner's secret sigh,
 It whispers to thy soul—"why wilt thou die?"
 Why in a land of sorrows, and of tears,
 Where joys are thinly sown, and choak'd with cares;
 Where ceaseless change afflicts the roving eye,
 And nature's brightest beauties bloom to die;
 Where parting comforts, ever on the wing,
 Tho' closely ty'd, must soar, and break the string;
 Why seek, amidst the dying and the dead,
 For false support, for that which is not bread;
 Why, with a soul of pure, ethereal fires,
 Fed with high hopes, and infinite desires,
 With life and immortality in view,
 Make earth your home, and ev'ry toy pursue?
 Ah! how deceiv'd amidst thy choicest store,
 Indulg'd in all, till thou can'st ask no more!
 Though wealth awaits thee, with o'erflowing hand,
 And fame proclaims thy honours through the land;
 Tho' pow'r, and ease, and ev'ry gay delight,
 Flatters thy fancy, e'en from morn to night;

Tho' pleasure woos thee with delusive charms,
 And binds in filken bands, thy manly arms;
 Tho' health, and strength, their better blessings grant,
 And thou hast all a happy man can want;
 Full soon must all these summer birds be gone,
 Take to their wings, and leave thee ev'ry one.
 Not a day passes, not a wind that blows,
 A wave that's ebbing, nor a tide that flows,
 But bears away some transitory joy,
 Some darling hope, or visionary toy,
 Which fancy form'd, or friendship taught to charm,
 Or nature fondled with embraces warm.
 This the best state the sons of earth can boast,
 To see by slow degrees, their glories lost.
 Yet not to all the mild gradation's giv'n,
 Thro' the high wisdom of all righteous Heav'n.
 Oft is the pitying eye distressed to see
 The man who grew, and flourish'd like a tree,
 With all his blooming honours thick around,
 Vig'rous, and fair, the pride of all the ground,
 By some swift blast of bleak misfortune's air,
 Stript all at once, an object of despair.
 Or grant the blessings, boast a longer date,
 And more remote the period fix'd by fate:
 Such is the state of sublunary joy,
 The mere possession does the bliss destroy:
 The pride of nature still its frailty bears,
 And fortune's favours ever bring their cares:
 Health in continuance, loses half its charms,
 And smiling pleasure dies within your arms:

Fame, wealth and power, and much-invited ease,
 False to their promise, pain you more than please :
 E'en human virtue but aspires to figh,
 By sad experience taught the reason why :
 Bliss is a dream, and life a fleeting shade,
 Bedeck'd with flow'rs, that in an instant fade :
 Earth's hopes are bubbles, bursting ere they fall,
 And vanity of vanities is all.
 Yet, there's a pow'r, who, through this sinking scene,
 Can keep the soul unshaken, and serene ;
 Can sweeten ev'ry blessing to the taste,
 And make amends for all that time can waste ;
 Whose providence our glory can advance,
 From ev'ry ill we call the work of chance ;
 Can set us free, amidst a land of slaves,
 Or lead us safely, o'er affliction's waves,
 And plant our feet upon a happier shore,
 Where chance, and time, and death shall be no more.

YE, who in search of Wisdom, travel far,
 Under the guidance of that glorious star
 That shone o'er Bethle'em, when the seers of old
 The joyful tidings of Emanuel told ;
 And ye who come, all-curious to enquire,
 Like Sheba's queen, to hear, and to admire ;
 And you, sweet mourners, who in silence sit,
 Weeping for sins you knew not to commit ;
 Whose tuneful harps, upon the willows hung,
 Had better grac'd the praise the muse has sung.
 Come, ever-gentle spirits, haste along,
 Breathe thro' the verse, and animate the song,

While I to WISDOM's sacred fane repair,
And thence invoke the oracle by pray'r.

OH thou ! who ever wast, and wilt be still,
The sole great arbitress of good and ill;
Whose full perfection dwells with God alone,
Ador'd by ev'ry angel round his throne ;
Who all that passes, can'st minutely tell
From highest heaven, down to deepest hell ;
Descend, bright guardian of our better parts,
Maintain thy grand tribunal in our hearts ;
Renew thy gracious visits ev'ry hour,
And grant some emanations of thy pow'r,
To shine thro' all our spirits, and afford
Light to our darkness ; speak thou but the word—
“ Let there be light,”—and light will instant shine,
And feeble mortals feel the ray divine.
Whether in pleasure's flow'ry paths we stray,
Or, sorrowing, tread affliction's thorny way.
Whether our barks on life's deceitful seas
Are tempest-tost, or careless drive at ease.
In ev'ry trial keep us safe from harm,
Guard us becalm'd, and guide us in the storm ;
Confirm that knowledge which thy grace decrees—
Strengthen that faith, which shakes at ev'ry breeze ;
Raise and ennoble ev'ry thought confin'd
And pour instruction o'er the darken'd mind ;
Wake into light the truths that lie conceal'd,
And, in thy own bright beauty, stand reveal'd ;
By charm'd attention, woo us to thy praise ;
Win us, and wed us firmly to thy ways ;

To thee alone make all our wishes tend,
 Our comfort now, our glory in the end.
 'Tis thou alone can'st fit us to fulfil
 Thy sacred laws, and judge of good and ill ;
 'Tis thou alone can'st teach us to decide
 'Twixt virtue's nobler aims, and human pride ;
 Can'st reach, with irresistible controul
 Thro' nature's finest feelings to the soul ;
 And make the tender mother, in the strife,
 Forego her darling child, to save his life.
 To thee in deep humility we bend,
 The rich man's ornament, the poor man's friend,
 The good man's monitor, the pilgrim's guide,
 The mourner's comfort, and the sage's pride ;
 The christian's lamp, the saint's supreme desire,
 The prophet's spirit and the seraph's fire !
 Daughter of heav'n, who reign'st through earth and seas,
 And air, and skies ; whose beauty, order, ease,
 Shines forth in all ; complete the glorious plan,
 And sway thy sceptre in the heart of man.
 Tho' at thy awful tasks we shrink dismay'd,
 Spare not, but be thy high behests obey'd,
 If at thy bidding, through the deeps we go ;
 Or wander in a wilderness of woe,
 ETERNAL WISDOM, grant us thy supplies ;
 ('Tis all we ask) oh teach us to be wise !

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